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EPA Region III

Office of Public Affairs

Mid-Atlantic Headlines

Monday, August 5, 2013

***** DAILY HOT LIST *****

EPA should resolve issues in Dimock

SCRANTON TIMES TRIBUNE (editorial)

Leaked data from the Environmental Protection Agency indicates internal dissent about its decision to close its investigation of water well contamination in Dimock, Susquehanna County. Issues raised by the EPA's regional staff warrant reopening the inquiry and finding definitive answers. Roughly a year ago the EPA concluded that water for 64 homes in the Dimock area was safe to drink, after residents contended that nearby natural gas drilling had fouled their water supplies. An internal EPA PowerPoint presentation, first obtained by the Washington Bureau of the Los Angeles Times, reveals that staff of the EPA regional office wanted to continue the assessment. The EPA collected data at 11 wells over four years. The PowerPoint presentation offered the conclusion that "methane and other gases released during drilling apparently cause significant damage to water quality." Officials at EPA headquarters rejected that view and curtailed the investigation in July 2012. In March 2012 the agency dropped an investigation of methane in drinking water in Parker County, Texas. In June 2012, the EPA ended a study of drinking water contamination in Pavilion, Wyo., even though it had found heavy contaminants in water, including hydrocarbons.

Multistate Chesapeake Bay Cleanup Plan Set for October

ASSOCIATED PRESS(Md.)

Several states in the Chesapeake Bay watershed are working toward having a new cleanup agreement ready by October of this year. The Capital reported in July that a new agreement is in the works with clearer goals and greater flexibility and transparency. It would be the fourth Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement in 30 years intended to spur improvements. The last agreement was signed in 2000. The new compact would reflect many of the same broad goals but also some changes. It includes strategies spurred by a 2009 presidential order for a "pollution diet" established by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. The order requires water pollution reductions by 2025. For the first time, the agreement includes the "headwaters" states of New York, Delaware and West Virginia, in addition to Maryland, Virginia, Pennsylvania and the District of Columbia.

Rehoboth rally supports national carbon-reduction effort

DELAWARE CAPE GAZETTE

Legislators, scientists and environmental advocates gathered at the Rehoboth Beach Boardwalk July 31 to support a national initiative to reduce carbon emissions by power plants. President Barack Obama has urged a reduction in emissions in an effort to curb the effects of climate change. For Rep. Pete Schwartzkopf, D-Rehoboth Beach, as representative of the beach town, climate change and sea level rise hit home. He said education is the most important

tool in combating climate change and sea level rise. "It's obvious something is going on. And I think the crux of the day is to start to raise awareness. You can't do anything legislatively unless you have public opinion on your side," he said. The effects of climate change can be seen in the increase in extreme weather, Schwartzkopf said, pointing to Hurricane Sandy, which had the biggest storm surge he's ever seen in his 40 years in being around the beaches. Severe weather is capable of major damage to the coastal economy, a key part of the state's economy, Schwartzkopf said. He said sea level is rising in places like Prime Hook and Bowers Beach. "It is coming, and it is coming faster than previously thought," Schwartzkopf said. Delaware has established carbon emissions standards; speakers including Rehoboth Commissioner Pat Coluzzi applauded Obama's efforts to institute similar legislation on a national level. Neelam Patel, climate program lead with the Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control, said scientists are seeing significant increases in average temperatures over the last 100 years along with significant increases in precipitation. She said projections for the state indicate that average temperatures will continue to increase over the next 100 years.

A Republican Case for Climate Action

NEW YORK TIMES (Op-Ed 7/1/13)

WILLIAM D. RUCKELSHAUS, LEE M. THOMAS, WILLIAM K. REILLY and CHRISTINE TODD WHITMAN - EACH of us took turns over the past 43 years running the Environmental Protection Agency. We served Republican presidents, but we have a message that transcends political affiliation: the United States must move now on substantive steps to curb climate change, at home and internationally. There is no longer any credible scientific debate about the basic facts: our world continues to warm, with the last decade the hottest in modern records, and the deep ocean warming faster than the earth's atmosphere. Sea level is rising. Arctic Sea ice is melting years faster than projected. The costs of inaction are undeniable. The lines of scientific evidence grow only stronger and more numerous. And the window of time remaining to act is growing smaller: delay could mean that warming becomes "locked in." A market-based approach, like a carbon tax, would be the best path to reducing greenhouse-gas emissions, but that is unachievable in the current political gridlock in Washington. Dealing with this political reality, President Obama's June climate action plan lays out achievable actions that would deliver real progress. He will use his executive powers to require reductions in the amount of carbon dioxide emitted by the nation's power plants and spur increased investment in clean energy technology, which is inarguably the path we must follow to ensure a strong economy along with a livable climate. The president also plans to use his regulatory power to limit the powerful warming chemicals known as hydrofluorocarbons and encourage the United States to join with other nations to amend the Montreal Protocol to phase out these chemicals. The landmark international treaty, which took effect in 1989, already has been hugely successful in solving the ozone problem. Rather than argue against his proposals, our leaders in Congress should endorse them and start the overdue debate about what bigger steps are needed and how to achieve them — domestically and internationally.

PENNSYLVANIA

PHILADELPHIA INQUIRER

New EPA chief: Climate controls will help economy

WASHINGTON (AP 7/30/13) - President Barack Obama's top environmental official wasted no time Tuesday taking on opponents of the administration's plan to crack down on global warming pollution. In her first speech as the head of EPA, Gina McCarthy told an audience gathered at Harvard Law School in Cambridge, Mass., that curbing climate-altering pollution will spark business innovation, grow jobs and strengthen the economy. The message was classic Obama, who has long said that the environment and the economy aren't in conflict and has sold ambitious plans to reduce greenhouse gases as a means to jumpstart a clean energy economy. McCarthy signaled Tuesday that she was ready for the fight, saying that the agency would continue issuing new rules, regardless of claims by Republicans and industry groups that under Obama the EPA has been the most aggressive and overreaching since it was formed more than 40 years ago. "Can we stop talking about environmental regulations killing jobs? Please, at least for today," said McCarthy, referring to one of the favorite talking points of Republicans and industry

groups.

GreenSpace: Best to be your bees' keeper (blog)

Have you thanked a bee lately? Roughly one out of every three or four bites we take is due to the busy little bees that pollinate our fruits and vegetables. Without bees, our food would cost more. Some might not be readily available at all. So our health is linked to the bees' health. Entomologists and agriculture experts have long been aware of the decline of many pollinators, including bees. One of the hardest workers is the honey bee, a non-native species. Hives of these bees are trucked cross-country to pollinate oranges in Florida, apples in Pennsylvania, blueberries in Maine. In 2006, when managed bees began disappearing and dying - a condition that, without a known cause, was later dubbed Colony Collapse Disorder - research efforts went into high gear. This year, the European Union voted to ban neonicotinoids, a widely used class of pesticides, which some have targeted in honey bee declines. But that's just part of the story.

A pop-up coffee shop perks up a vacant lot (blog)

Less than a day after landing home from a six-week trip in Thailand, a sleepy-eyed Kathryn Sclavi headed out to promote her latest art project. Iced coffee and flyers in hand, she walked over to the corner of 12th and Mount Vernon Streets, where lay a just-mowed, vacant lot. This would become the centerpiece of her next installation. Starting Aug. 7, Sclavi will breathe life into the lot through FreeShop CoffeeShop - a pop-up coffee shop intended to draw the community together through serving free coffee. "When I was a kid, there was a baseball field in our neighborhood, and then all of a sudden for one week, it turned into this amazing carnival and it was the best thing that could happen," said Sclavi. "That's what I hope happens here. There's this empty lot, and then every Wednesday in the summer it'll turn into this circussy-like canopy with twinkly lights and become a magical experience for people."

Natural gas boom a blessing for Pa.(letter to the editor)

The Marcellus Shale formation - the second-largest natural-gas field in the world - has been a blessing for Pennsylvania's workers and our economy. Almost a quarter-million people in Pennsylvania work to produce natural gas from the Marcellus Shale or in related industries. Thanks to the growth of hydraulic fracturing, commonly known as fracking, the Marcellus has been responsible for more than 150,000 new hires in the past three years - almost three-quarters of them state residents. The average salary in core fracking industries is more than \$90,000 a year. In 2010 alone, oil and gas development utilizing fracking contributed more than \$11 billion to Pennsylvania's economy. The key to this economic success story has been the welcoming regulatory environment our policymakers and legislators have created. They are keeping Pennsylvanians safe while encouraging investment. As some neighboring states begin to catch on, lawmakers need to remain vigilant about making sure Pennsylvania has the smart policies we need to keep the investment dollars flowing. Williamsport has been the center of our natural-gas boom, with an economic growth rate of 7.8 percent. Even Pennsylvanians not directly involved in fracking benefit through lower energy costs. Between 2008 and 2011, the largest natural-gas utilities in the region averaged rate cuts of more than 40 percent, resulting in savings of \$3,200 per customer. As government revenues have fallen because of the economic downturn, oil and gas development utilizing fracking has been critical to state and local budgets, producing revenues that help pay for teachers, police officers, and other public employees. Statewide, average sales-tax collections between 2007 and 2010 fell by 3.8 percent overall - but they were up 11.4 percent in counties that had drilled 150 or more Marcellus Shale wells.

PITTSBURGH POST-GAZETTE

After delayed vote, EPA gains a tough leader to tackle climate change (New York Times

story)ANNAPOLIS, Md. -- When Lisa Jackson announced at the end of last year that she was stepping down as the administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency, President Barack Obama faced a choice. He could play it safe by appointing her deputy or he could confront Congress head-on and signal a strong commitment to tackling climate change by appointing the agency's head of air quality, Gina McCarthy. "Why would you want me?" Ms. McCarthy said she asked the president when he offered her the top job. "Do you realize the rules I've done over the past three or four years?" Ms. McCarthy, an earthy, tough-talking New Englander who drew criticism as the head of the agency's air and radiation office during Mr. Obama's first term, then ticked off a list of controversial air pollution regulations she helped write: tough greenhouse gas standards for vehicles, a tighter ozone limit that the White House rejected, the first rule on mercury emissions from power plants, and a regulation on smokestack pollution that crosses state lines, which has been blocked by a federal court. She warned that earning

confirmation from the Senate might be difficult and that there were safer choices available. The president told Ms. McCarthy that his environmental and presidential legacy would be incomplete without a serious effort to address climate change. "I'm so glad he said that, because if he hadn't, I wouldn't have wanted this job," she said. "It's an issue I've worked on for so many years, and it just can't wait."

Shuster: 'EPA is running rampant'

(7/3/13)WASHINGTON -- A day after his colleagues passed legislation to curb carbon regulation, Rep. Bill Shuster, R-Blair, took his own swipe at the Obama administration's efforts to beef up environmental regulations. Mr. Shuster on Friday introduced a bill that would require congressional approval for any new Environmental Protection Agency rules affecting domestic energy production. The legislation is inspired by the closure of two southwestern Pennsylvania coal plants employing 380 people, and by Mr. Shuster's belief that the EPA is overstepping its authority. "The EPA is running rampant," Mr. Shuster said at a conference call Friday. In a recent speech on climate change, the president urged the EPA to work to reduce carbon emissions. To meet the proposed standards, the coal industry would have to invest billions in technology that isn't widely available, industry officials have said.

House limits Obama on environment regs

(7/2/13)WASHINGTON -- The House threw a wrench in President Barack Obama's climate change initiative Thursday with a vote to limit the government's ability to enact environmental regulations. If the Senate follows suit, regulators would need congressional approval to implement new rules with an economic impact of more than \$1 billion. The bill also would allow the Energy Department to block environmental regulations that would adversely affect the economy. Sponsored by Rep. Bill Cassidy, R-La., the bill passed, 232-181. "President Obama's EPA rules and regulations cost small businesses and families hard-earned money, adding up to billions of dollars every year. Handed down by unelected bureaucrats that are unaccountable to the American people, these rules continue to dig deeper into people's pockets and stifle job creation," Majority Leader Eric Cantor, R-Va., said after the vote. Opponents said the Energy Consumers Relief Act puts energy company profits ahead of public health. It would "cripple the ability of the Environmental Protection Agency to protect the water we drink and the air we breathe," said Rep. Lois Capps, D-Calif. The bill includes a measure sponsored by Upper St. Clair Republican Tim Murphy that would require explicit congressional approval in order for regulators to use "cost of carbon" valuation, a calculation of environmental risk based on factors such as the cost of air-conditioning homes and shoring up seawalls because of rises in ocean water caused by climate change. Mr. Murphy said the calculations are unreliable estimates that shouldn't be used. Reliance on them could have serious consequences for the coal industry, which is key to his district's economy. Strict environmental regulation is expensive to comply with, Mr. Murphy said. The anticipated cost of compliance has been blamed for the recent closure of coal plants in Pennsylvania and Ohio, and the loss of hundreds of jobs. "In southwestern Pennsylvania, coal is our heritage. ... That heritage and prosperity is threatened by this new regulation," he said in a floor speech Thursday.

BREAKING MEDIA

Breaking Energy Story of the Week – DOE Lab Releases Preliminary Statement on Hydraulic Fracturing Study
NETL has stated nothing of concern has thus far been found for preliminary results of its ongoing hydraulic fracturing study at Pennsylvania's Marcellus Shale. On July 19, 2013, the Department of Energy's National Energy Technology Laboratory (NETL) released a preliminary statement of its ongoing hydraulic fracturing study at two Pennsylvania drilling sites. NETL stated that it is far too early to make any firm claims. The first-of-its kind study involves a comprehensive assessment of environmental impacts of shale gas development at industry-provided test sites in southwestern Pennsylvania's Marcellus Shale formation. The NETL study monitors air, land, and water resources through different gas production phases. To this end, NETL has been collecting, analyzing, and validating data pertinent to air quality, fugitive methane, pressure variations, and water and gas chemistry, among others. NETL injected special fracturing fluid tracers to monitor migration through the shale formation. NETL has defined two main objectives for its study: Assess the impact of shale gas production on ambient air quality. Verify the existence of zonal-isolation between gas-producing formations and drinking-water aquifers after the hydraulic fracturing process.

CANON-MCMILLAN PATCH

DEP Issues Permit to Range Resources for First Well in North Strabane - - The state Department of Environmental

Protection this week issued a permit to Southpoint-based Range Resources for an unconventional well planned for North Strabane Township. The permit for the well—the first in the township—was issued Monday for what is being referred to as the Minor Samuel Unit, according to the DEP website. How that drilling will proceed largely depends on an anticipated state Supreme Court ruling on a challenge to Act 13—Pennsylvania's law governing Marcellus Shale activity. If the supreme court upholds a Commonwealth Court decision that pre-emption of local zoning laws is unconstitutional, then Range Resources would be required to go through the conditional use process as stipulated by North Strabane's ordinance governing Marcellus Shale drilling. If the supreme court rules that pre-emption is constitutional, Range Resources would not be required to submit to any conditions set by North Strabane officials before proceeding with drilling activity.

GROUNDED - A STATE JOURNAL ENERGY BLOG

PADEP extends long-term air quality study in Marcellus region

The Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection announced Aug. 1 that it has extended its one-year, long-term air monitoring study in the Marcellus region in southwestern Pennsylvania through the end of this year. "The use of natural gas holds great promise in continuing recent trends of cleaner air in this state, and the data from this study will allow us to make sound decisions for the long-term," DEP Acting Secretary E. Christopher Abruzzo said. "Our study, which is stationed in one of the most active drilling regions in the state, will help us to identify potential air quality-related risks associated with drilling, processing and transporting natural gas," Abruzzo said. In July 2012, DEP announced it would conduct a long-term study in southwestern Pennsylvania to measure ambient air concentrations of pollutants. The study, designed to identify potential health risks associated with the extraction, processing and transportation of natural gas, is under way in Chartiers Township, in Washington County. Both methane, or "dry" gas, and natural gas liquids are processed and moved to sale there via compressor stations and pipeline networks. Samples collected during the study will be subjected to rigorous quality assurance and data validation criteria. A final report is expected in the spring of 2014.

LEGAL INTELLIGENCER

Taxing the Marcellus Shale

Pennsylvania imposes an impact fee on energy companies for each natural gas-producing well they drill in the state. The impact fee was enacted in response to the large concentration of natural gas producers flocking into the Marcellus Shale region. However, in the commotion of ramping up drilling operations and focusing on the impact fee, companies may fail to fully consider the effects of Pennsylvania's sales, corporate net income and franchise taxes on their Marcellus operations. So while safety, land and mineral rights litigation often grabs the spotlight when discussing Marcellus Shale activities, taxes could be the final frontier in Marcellus Shale litigation. This article discusses: (1) the impact fee and its effect on Pennsylvania drillers; (2) the basic exemptions available for Marcellus companies; and (3) lesser-known issues involving Keystone Opportunity Zones and Pennsylvania's franchise tax. In 2012, Governor Tom Corbett signed Act 13, permitting counties to impose an impact fee on natural gas-producing wells drilled. The law gives each county the power to impose a \$40,000 to \$60,000 flat fee on a well in its first year of operation, with the fee declining over the next 15 years. A producer's total fee is based on (1) the number of wells the producer operates in each municipality within each county that has imposed the fee; (2) the date each well was drilled or ceased production; and (3) the price of natural gas. Although signed in 2012, Act 13 authorizes a retroactive impact fee on all wells drilled before 2012, in addition to newly drilled wells. There is some question as to whether the retroactive nature of the impact fee passes constitutional muster. It is possible that some of the harder-hit energy companies may challenge the retroactive portion of the impact fee, resulting in the invalidation or repeal of the retroactive portions of Act 13. If successful, producers would be entitled to refunds.

SCRANTON TIMES TRIBUNE

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EPA ended a study of drinking water contamination in Pavilion, Wyo., even though it had found heavy contaminants in water, including hydrocarbons.

OBSERVER-REPORTER

DEP announces air quality study to continue through end of year

A one-year study commissioned by the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection will be extended through the end of the year, the agency announced Thursday. "The point of the extension is to make clear it is a long-term study," said DEP spokesman Kevin Sunday. "We're shooting for about a year of sampling, taking us into the fall." The study, which began in July 2012, was designed to track potential health risks associated with natural gas extraction, processing and transportation. The air quality assessment was originally scheduled to be completed last month. Sunday said the extension was in part due to a delay in installing monitoring hardware at satellite sites and to allow more time for analyzing the data. The department hoped to release a final report next spring. The DEP released a "technical support document" Thursday that made public information about the study's design, sampling criteria and analysis methods. According to the 60-page document, researchers are collecting data on the concentration of pollutants near shale-related sites in the Chartiers-Houston area. "Washington County is a hotbed of Marcellus activity," Sunday said. "Anything that could be going on with drilling is going on in Washington County – whether it's compressor stations, pipelines or wet gas processing facilities."

THE ALMANAC.NET

Panelists: Marcellus growth still in early stages

Panelists at the Aug. 1 annual energy symposium repeated a common theme: The rise of natural gas production from the Marcellus Shale has been stunningly rapid in its abundance, economic impact and adaptation to environmental challenges. The fourth annual symposium was sponsored by the Washington County Chamber of Commerce and Washington County Energy Partners at the Southpointe Hilton Garden Inn. The symposium, which was emceed by state Sen. Tim Solobay, D-Canonsburg, was held in conjunction with the Mylan Classic golf tournament. Panelists ranging from natural gas producers to regulators and supply chain specialists described how in just a few short years natural gas became a game-changer in the energy market. "We're still in the early stages of development," said Scott Roy, vice president for government affairs for Range Resources Corp., the largest leaseholder in the Marcellus industry. The Fort Worth, Texas, company, which has its Southern Appalachian Shale regional office in Southpointe, now has 300 direct employees and another 5,000 contractors working in the Marcellus.

WASHINGTON, D.C.

WASHINGTON POST

Federal-employee groups want to tweak phased-retirement rules

Two federal-employee groups want to expand the government's new phased-retirement program to more federal workers, but they disagree about the program's proposed mentoring requirements. The National Treasury Employees Union and the National Active and Retired Federal Employees association last week recommended changes to the draft rules in letters to the Office of Personnel Management, which is taking suggestions until Aug. 5 before implementing the program. By law, phased retirement will allow federal employees to work part-time after the age of retirement while receiving partial annuities and continuing to pay toward their benefits. But OPM has to work out the more granular details of the program. NTEU and NARFE, which support phased retirement, have raised concerns about a proposed rule that would limit eligibility to workers with 20 or more years of service with the federal government. Both groups have asked OPM to allow older employees to participate with fewer years, a move that would expand the program to more employees.

Ted Cruz's claim that the 1995-96 government shutdown was good for the GOP

Sen. Ted Cruz is pushing for a "last stand" on defunding the new health-care law, a.k.a. Obamacare, by picking a fight that would probably result in a government shutdown. His comment above has earned him some scorn from other Republicans, who do not remember the 1995-96 showdown so fondly. At the Heritage event, Cruz actually spent about five minutes discussing why the conventional wisdom is wrong. (Go to the 29-minute mark - video not attached here.) Here are his two key points: 1. A "government shutdown" is a misnomer, as it is simply the temporary suspension of nonessential government services, which, Cruz said, "happens every single week on the weekends." 2. The consequences were mainly good. He attributed both the emergence of balanced budgets and the passage of welfare reform to "standing up for principle." While House Republicans lost seats, they kept their majority. Meanwhile, Senate

Republicans gained two seats, even as Bill Clinton won reelection. This is certainly an interesting take on history. As it happens, The Fact Checker had a front row seat to this battle, covering it day after day, and there are a few facts that Cruz is glossing over. We have written previously on this, but perhaps it's time for a refresher course. The Facts - The government shutdown took place in two phases. The first lasted five days in November 1995, until the White House agreed to congressional demands to balance the budget within seven years. But talks on implementing that agreement failed, and the second shutdown lasted 21 days, from Dec. 15, 1995, to Jan. 6., 1996. The sticking point was the Republicans' demand that Clinton agree to their version of a balanced budget. In months of negotiations, Clinton had actually given a fair amount of ground, infuriating Democrats on the left. He agreed to a balanced budget over seven years, to tax cuts, to changes in mandatory spending programs such as Medicare. But the two sides remained far apart on the pace of spending cuts — and even farther apart on the policies behind those cuts. Part of the problem for Republicans is that they did poorly in explaining what they were doing — and why they were doing it — as some 800,000 federal workers were idled. "The communications effort in support of the cuts was not handled particularly cleverly or systematically, much less strategically," wrote Quin Hillyer, who was spokesman for the House Appropriations Committee at the time. "We were usually flying by the seat of our pants."

Maryland to seek private firm for Purple Line project

Gov. Martin O'Malley (D) plans to make the announcement about the 16-mile transit link at an event in Bethesda on Monday. The governor also plans to highlight more than \$1 billion in new funding for transportation projects in Montgomery County, administration officials said. The package includes a \$400 million state commitment for construction of the Purple Line, as well as more funding for county bus service, new intersections and other road work in one of the most congested regions in the state. "It doesn't solve every problem, but it helps us a lot," said Montgomery County Executive Isiah Leggett (D), who plans to attend the event and was briefed on the package. The event is the latest in a series launched by O'Malley after the passage this year of a major transportation funding bill that gradually raises gas taxes. The first increase of 3.5 cents per gallon took effect last month. By mid-2016, motorists can expect to pay as much as 20 cents more per gallon, according to legislative analysts. At the events, including one in Prince George's County last month, O'Malley has focused not on the unpopular tax increase but the promise of new jobs and economic development that come with the projects.

15 million-year-old whale skull found on banks of Potomac River

From the banks of the Potomac River, in a region steeped in American history, a massive object was dug up last month that apparently can be traced back to a time long before this country's recorded history, a time deep in the world's prehistory. It is the skull of a whale that is "approximately 15 million years old," said John Nance, the paleontology collections manager at the Calvert Marine Museum in Southern Maryland. The skull is believed to be that of a baleen whale and to weigh about 1,000 pounds. It was excavated from the cliffs at the edge of the Potomac on the grounds of Stratford Hall, the home of Virginia's Lee family and the birthplace of Robert E. Lee. Stratford Hall is in Westmoreland County, and both George Washington and the country's fifth president, James Monroe, were born in that county on the Northern Neck, about 100 miles southeast of Washington.

DELAWARE

DELAWARE CAPE GAZETTE

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rise hit home. He said education is the most important tool in combating climate change and sea level rise. "It's obvious something is going on. And I think the crux of the day is to start to raise awareness. You can't do anything legislatively unless you have public opinion on your side," he said. The effects of climate change can be seen in the increase in extreme weather, Schwartzkopf said, pointing to Hurricane Sandy, which had the biggest storm surge he's ever seen in his 40 years in being around the beaches. Severe weather is capable of major damage to the coastal economy, a key part of the state's economy, Schwartzkopf said. He said sea level is rising in places like Prime Hook and Bowers Beach. "It is coming, and it is coming faster than previously thought," Schwartzkopf said. Delaware has established carbon emissions standards; speakers including Rehoboth Commissioner Pat Coluzzi applauded Obama's efforts to institute similar legislation on a national level. Neelam Patel, climate program lead with the Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control, said scientists are seeing significant increases in average temperatures over the last 100 years along with significant increases in precipitation. She said projections for the state indicate that average temperatures will continue to increase over the next 100 years.

WEST VIRGINIA

COAL TATTOO(blog)

If W.Va. Democrats really want to help coal

Sometimes, it's hard to know where West Virginia could really start in getting on the road toward even having a more reasonable discussion of the future of coal, let alone developing better policies for that future, to help coalfield communities truly prosper and do our state's part to deal with the climate crisis. Yesterday's trip to Washington — and especially the media show that followed — was yet another missed opportunity for Sen. Manchin, Rep. Rahall, Gov. Tomblin, Speaker Miley and other leaders to stop muddling the facts, end the pandering and provide West Virginians with some straight talk about the problems ahead and the path toward a brighter future. I'm reminded, as I often am, of the words of the late Sen. Robert C. Byrd, who advised West Virginians to embrace the future: Change has been a constant throughout the history of our coal industry. West Virginians can choose to anticipate change and adapt to it, or resist and be overrun by it. One thing is clear. The time has arrived for the people of the Mountain State to think long and hard about which course they want to choose. One way West Virginia could try to anticipate change and adapt to it is to become a leader — a real leader — on carbon capture and storage technology. I know, I know ... CCS is too expensive. There are too many questions about whether it can be widely deployed, about whether it's safe, about whether it really works. And, of course, just capturing carbon emissions doesn't do anything to address the environmental damage from mountaintop removal or coal ash pollution, or the health costs to mine workers and the communities near mining operations. But some pretty smart people still say CCS is something that our society here in the U.S. and around the world needs to pursue aggressively. Environmentalists are fond of quoting the findings of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, so here's what the IPCC said most recently about CCS: To continue to extract and combust the world's rich endowment of oil, coal, peat, and natural gas at current or increasing rates, and so release more of the stored carbon into the atmosphere, is no longer environmentally sustainable, unless carbon dioxide capture and storage (CCS) technologies currently being developed can be widely deployed. And here's what the Union of Concerned Scientists said in a major report issued in October 2008: An important potential benefit of developing CCS technology is that it may someday be applied to power plants that burn or gasify biomass (plant-based materials). Such a power plant could actually be carbonnegative because the plant matter comprising the biomass will have taken CO₂ from the air through the process of photosynthesis, and CCS technology will then capture the CO₂ and store it underground. Having the ability to achieve negative CO₂ emissions in future decades may well be needed if we are to keep global CO₂ concentrations at relatively safe levels. These days, the talking point from coal and its political defenders is that "clean coal" — their shorthand for CCS, really, since they won't talk about other ways coal isn't clean — is that

the technology isn't available, that it's not ready to be widely deployed.

CHARLESTON DAILY MAIL

EPA meeting will change nothing (column)

Gov. Earl Ray Tomblin and the West Virginia delegation emerged from the White House meeting with EPA Administrator Gina Mc-Carthy sounding optimistic. Tomblin said McCarthy promised to look into the issues raised by the West Virginians about the economic impacts on the coal industry and the state of EPA regulations and enforcement. "That is the most positive thing I've heard out of the EPA since I've been governor," Tomblin said. True enough, but that's not saying much. The West Virginia Coal Association says it remains extremely time consuming and costly to get a new mine permit or to expand an existing site. The industry complains the EPA continually drags out the process, and compliance with one permit change leads to another and another. I'm told by an industry official of a permit application that's gone on for nearly seven years at a cost of \$4.2 million. It's possible, though not probable, that following the Washington meeting the EPA will take a more reasonable approach to permitting. Those buoyed by the gathering are hanging at least some of their hope on reopening the channels of communication with the EPA. Well, the Obama administration and the EPA have already communicated their intentions clearly, even if McCarthy chose her words more carefully during the meeting. The day before, McCarthy told an audience at Harvard that fighting climate change remains a top priority, and one that trumps economic concerns. "Can we stop talking about environmental regulations killing jobs, please? Just at least for today," she said. That's an easier sell in Boston than in Boone County.

HUNTINGTON HERALD-DISPATCH

Lead exposure: The problem hasn't completely gone away

In 1983 the Capitol building in Washington, D.C., underwent a renovation that removed more than 30 layers of old, flaky paint. The project was finished in 1987 -- but Congress doesn't seem to have improved its appearance since then. And now it all makes sense! They must have left behind a few layers of brain-damaging lead paint. Recognized as the most significant environmental hazard to children in the U.S. and Canada (children's growing bodies absorb lead easily), high blood levels of lead are associated with irreversible IQ deficits, attention-related behavior problems and poor academic achievement. (Does that sound like Congress to you?) But in 2012, when the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention lowered the safe threshold for lead exposure (from a blood level of 10 mcg to 5 mcg), doubling the number of U.S. kids at risk for lead poisoning to 500,000, legislators slashed the national lead abatement program budget from \$29 million to \$2 million. (Does that sound appropriate to you?) Now it's up to communities and families to take up the campaign.

NATURAL RESOURCES DEFENSE COUNCIL

Willie Nelson Against Mountaintop Removal Mining

Willie Nelson opposes mountaintop removal coal mining, and this week NRDC released a video of his iconic song America the Beautiful that was donated by Willie to help draw attention to this extreme form of coal mining. Despite the shift by 130 U.S. power plants away from coal, mountaintop removal mining continues to ravish Appalachian communities. Willie, whom Emmylou Harris called "The Voice of America," turned 80 this year and this video underscores Willie's life-long commitment to so many important community preservation causes. With the release of this video, Willie joins many other music artists speaking out against MTR, including Emmylou Harris, Dave Mathews, Sheryl Crow, Ashley Judd, Kathy Matea, Kenny Alpin and others. Willie Nelson is arguably the single most visible advocate for bio-based transportation fuels. He's the nation's fiercest advocate for local family farms, an animal rights advocate and a passionate spokesperson for sustainable communities more generally. Willie Nelson is widely recognized as an American icon. He was inducted into the Country Music Hall of Fame in 1993, and he received the Kennedy Center Honors in 1998. In 2011 he was inducted to the National Agricultural Hall of Fame, for his labor in Farm Aid and other fund raisers to benefit farmers. In 2003

Texas Governor Rick Perry established the Texas Music Project, the state's official music charity, and Willie was named Honorary Chairman of the Advisory Board of the project. And Willie Nelson is a passionate advocate against mountaintop removal coal mining. Previously he lent his rendition of Bob Dylan's "Blowin' in the Wind" to the soundtrack of the movie Coal Country. The release this week by NRDC of his rendition of America the Beautiful is Willie's first video to focus on mountaintop removal coal mining.

WATER ONLINE

Local And National Groups Defend Clean Water Act Against ...

Chicken manure threatens Potomac River in West Virginia case; Groups file legal brief to protect public health and environment. A coalition of local and national public interest organizations yesterday filed a brief in federal court supporting the Environmental Protection Agency's long-held authority under the Clean Water Act to regulate waste from commercial animal farms and seeking to confirm that a large West Virginia poultry operation should comply with all applicable regulations. The Center for Food Safety, Earthjustice, Food & Water Watch, Potomac Riverkeeper, Waterkeeper Alliance, and West Virginia Rivers Coalition say neither the specific West Virginia agricultural operation in this case, nor the other tens of thousands of commercial farms like it across the country, should be exempt from regulations intended to protect waterways and public health. "This case is not just about the Potomac River, and it is not just about one commercial poultry operation," said Robin Broder of Potomac Riverkeeper. "The Farm Bureau wants this operation and other commercial farms like it to get a free pass from laws that protect the rivers and streams we use for recreation and for drinking water. This case is about safeguarding the waters in our own communities. Americans have a right to clean water -- businesses cannot take that away from us." The case was prompted by a large Hardy County commercial poultry operation's refusal to comply with an Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) order directing it to obtain a Clean Water Act permit for manure pollution it was discharging. The facility houses 200,000 chickens at any one time and contains ditches that direct manure-contaminated runoff into a tributary of the South Branch of the Potomac River. The South Branch and many of its tributaries are already identified as impaired under the Clean Water Act because of unacceptable levels of pollution. The Alt commercial animal operation admits that it is polluting the tributary, but claims its pollution is exempt from the Clean Water Act. The brief filed yesterday seeks confirmation that no such exemption applies.

WEST VIRGINIA PUBLIC RADIO

Fracking, fractures and human-induced earthquakes

Is the growth of the gas business in WV shaking up more than the economy? A new Concord University geological initiative could help scientists recognize the potential for man-made earthquakes caused by natural gas drilling. According to Workforce WV, there were over 2,000 associated with oil and gas extraction in 2012, earning nearly \$175-million in wages. But does the drilling leave the ground more susceptible to earthquakes? According to the West Virginia Geological survey there have been about 20 measurable earthquakes in the state in the past five years, more than half of those were in Braxton County where Chesapeake Energy was disposing fluid via deep well injection. Chesapeake voluntarily lowered the pressure of its injections in Braxton County at the request of the West Virginia Division of Environmental Protection in 2010, although they denied the wells had anything to do with the earthquakes. Dr. Joe Allen is a geology professor and the chair of the Division of Science, Math and Health at Concord University. He hopes to understand rock fracturing and earthquakes better by studying West Virginia's geology from Greenland. A grant from the Higher Education Policy Commission is helping to launch the first steps. His trip this fall is to study fossilized fractures in rock, not to be confused with the process of fracking- which we'll get to a little later. Allen says research in Greenland can benefit West Virginians and their understanding of local basement rock. "Southern West Virginia actually is the most seismically active in West Virginia," Allen says. "So again those are deep, we don't have a good seismic array to tell the depth or distribution of seismicity here or even what rock types they're fracturing in and so that's kinda why we have started this other research." Basically, the rocks that Allen needs to look at in order to complete his study are easier to access in Greenland. This same layer of rock is buried under ten-thousand feet of sedimentary in the state, under West Virginia's coal, oil and gas reserves. The idea behind Allen's research is to understand how preexisting patterns in Greenland rock texture, might influence the direction and shape of fractures. So, it's kinda like splitting wood. Sometimes wood will split around a knot while at other times it will go through it. Understanding how these cracks form, where they start and stop, how fast they form and how much stress is involved are all part of the study. A recent study published in Science Magazine called "Injection-Induced Earthquakes", makes a connection between fracking, waste-water disposal, and human-induced earthquakes.

WHEELING INTELLIGENCER

Oil & Gas Output Showing Increase

The Marcellus and Utica shale formations have become known for their untapped reserves of natural gas. The formations also may hold vast amounts of oil - something Chesapeake Energy is learning as it drills in the local area. The company pumped 44 percent more oil from April to June than it did during the same period in 2012 from its local operations. And more could be on the way. Chesapeake is the largest leasehold acreage holder in the Marcellus Shale, which spans from northern West Virginia across much of Pennsylvania into southern New York. The company also holds substantial acreage in Ohio's Utica Shale. Steve Dixon, Chesapeake's chief operating officer, said the company should produce 40 million barrels of oil this year. Previous earnings reports indicated the Oklahoma City-based company has been producing oil in both Ohio and Marshall counties. As companies such as Chesapeake continue drilling wells and pumping gas, the leases signed by Upper Ohio Valley mineral owners will begin to pay off, as landowners will receive checks for leases as high as \$6,000 per acre with production royalties of as high as 20 percent. In the Utica Shale, Chesapeake's average daily production of natural gas increased by 48 percent from the first three months of this year to the second quarter of the year. The average Utica well that started producing in the months from April to June yielded about 6.6 million cubic feet of natural gas per day. In the wet gas portion of the Marcellus Shale, Chesapeake's average daily production was about 208 million cubic feet per day, a 56 percent increase from the second quarter of 2012.

ASSOCIATED PRESS (W. VA.)

Oil firms fracking seabed off California

Companies prospecting for oil off California's coast have used hydraulic fracturing on at least a dozen occasions to force open cracks beneath the seabed, and now regulators are investigating if the practice should require a separate permit and be subject to stricter environmental review. While debate has raged over fracking on land, prompting efforts to ban or severely restrict it, offshore fracking has occurred with little attention in sensitive coastal waters where, for decades, new oil leases have been prohibited. Hundreds of pages of federal documents released by the government to The Associated Press and advocacy groups through the Freedom of Information Act show regulators have permitted fracking in the Pacific Ocean at least 12 times since the late 1990s and recently approved a new project. The targets are the vast oil fields in the Santa Barbara Channel, site of a 1969 spill that spewed more than 3 million gallons of crude oil into the ocean, spoiled miles of beaches and killed thousands of birds and other wildlife. The disaster prompted a moratorium on new drill leases and inspired federal clean-water laws and the modern environmental movement. Companies are doing the offshore fracking -- which involves pumping hundreds of thousands of gallons of salt water, sand and chemicals into undersea shale and sand formations -- to stimulate old wells into new oil production. Federal regulators thus far have exempted the chemical fluids used in offshore fracking from the nation's clean-water laws, allowing companies to release fracking fluid into the sea without filing a separate environmental-impact report or statement looking at the possible effects. That exemption was affirmed this year by the Environmental Protection Agency, according to the internal emails reviewed by the AP. Fracking fluids can comprise hundreds of chemicals -- some known and others that aren't, since they are protected as trade secrets. Some of these chemicals are toxic to fish larvae and crustaceans, bottom dwellers most at risk from drilling activities, according to government health-disclosure documents detailing some of the fluids used off California's shore. Marine scientists, petroleum engineers and regulatory officials interviewed by the AP could point to no studies that have been performed on the effects of fracking fluids on the marine environment. Research regarding traditional offshore oil exploration has found that drilling fluids can cause reproductive harm to some marine creatures. "This is a significant data gap, and we need to know what the impacts are before offshore fracking becomes widespread," said Samantha Joye, a marine scientist at the University of Georgia who studies the effects of oil spills in the ocean environment. The EPA and the federal agency that oversees offshore drilling, the Bureau of Safety and Environmental Enforcement or BSEE, conduct routine inspections during fracking projects, but any spills or leaks are largely left to the oil companies to report. In a statement to the AP, the EPA defended its oversight of offshore fracking, saying its system ensures that the practice does not pollute the environment in a way that would endanger human health. Oil companies must obtain permits for wastewater and stormwater discharges from production platforms that "ensure all fluids used in the drilling and production process will not adversely impact water quality," the statement said. Oil companies also maintain that much of the fracking fluid is treated before being discharged into the sea. Tupper Hull, spokesman for the Western States Petroleum Association, said fracking is safe and has "never

been associated with any risk or harm to the environment" in more than six decades in California.

EPA asks judge to reject W.Va. farmers lawsuit

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency wants a judge to affirm its power to make poultry growers get water pollution permits for runoff from their operations - even though it's withdrawn the requirement for a West Virginia farmer who sued. Hardy County farmer Lois Alt is challenging EPA's authority to apply a Clean Water Act provision to what she says is storm water runoff, calling its action an illegal overreach and a threat to other growers in the Chesapeake Bay watershed. But EPA said in a motion for summary judgment filed Thursday that its authority is clear, and Alt has no justification for an exemption. The EPA had threatened to fine Alt for polluting streams but rescinded the violations after she sued last year. U.S. District Judge John Preston Bailey then denied EPA's motion to dismiss the case because the agency hasn't changed its underlying position that some chicken farms are "concentrated animal feeding operations." That would mean the EPA can require them to obtain permits they've never previously needed. Nor is Alt's mere compliance with the agency's demands enough to render the case moot. Bailey said EPA has issued orders to two other farmers in West Virginia and Virginia virtually identical to the one issued against Alt. The EPA said dust, feathers, and fine particles of dander and manure from Alt's chicken farm could land on the ground, come into contact with storm water and flow into ditches, eventually reaching Chesapeake Bay tributaries. The watershed encompasses parts of Delaware, Maryland, New York, Pennsylvania, Virginia and West Virginia, and all of the District of Columbia. Alt acknowledged there is waste-tainted runoff from her farm but argued it was agricultural storm water, not "process wastewater" that would be subject to regulation under the Clean Water Act. In its latest motion, EPA said its interpretation of the law "is not a new position developed for enforcement in the Alt order." EPA said it has long held the view that it can require a permit for manure and litter discharged from poultry houses through ventilation fans if it threatens waterways. The cleanliness of Alt's operation today is irrelevant, the agency said. "Plaintiffs seem to imply that a permit is required only for bad actors, or that the requirement to apply for a permit is a punitive measure," the EPA wrote. "That is neither a fair nor accurate assumption." The West Virginia Farm Bureau and the American Farm Bureau have intervened in Alt's case because they say it has economic implications beyond Hardy County. Environmental and consumer groups have intervened on the EPA's side. The Center for Food Safety, Earthjustice, Food & Water Watch, Potomac Riverkeeper, Waterkeeper Alliance, and West Virginia Rivers Coalition also filed a motion for summary judgment Thursday. They say neither Alt's farm "nor the other tens of thousands of commercial farms like it across the country" should be exempt from federal water-protection laws. "This case is not just about the Potomac River, and it is not just about one commercial poultry operation," said Robin Broder of Potomac Riverkeeper. "The Farm Bureau wants this operation and other commercial farms like it to get a free pass from laws that protect the rivers and streams we use for recreation and for drinking water."

MARYLAND

BALTIMORE SUN

Bay grant will aid Ellicott City stream restoration

The Howard County Department of Public Works will tap a grant from the Chesapeake Bay Trust Fund to repair and restore a stream in Ellicott City that officials say has been badly degraded by erosion. Richard Powell, a project manager with the department's stormwater division, said the project involves a roughly 300-foot stretch of the stream running along and under Tuscany Road near Lombardi Drive before emptying into the Little Patuxent River. The project is scheduled to begin around Aug. 12. Powell said construction will not affect traffic, but a portion of the sidewalk will be closed. It should be completed in May. The cost is about \$280,000. Powell said the erosion is so severe it uncovered a buried sewer line. "This is our biggest concern," Powell said. "The pipe itself is not broken, but where it was previously buried, it's now exposed. So it will be recovered in the process." Powell said damage to the stream was caused by increased stormwater runoff as woodlands, marshes and meadowlands that absorb rain have been replaced with impervious surfaces such as roadways, rooftops and parking lots. "Often the result is that you get

vertical stream banks; when the stream starts meandering from side to side, it tends to cut the banks out," Powell said. As a result of erosion, vegetation along the bank is washed away, which destabilizes the banks even more. Fixing the damage, Powell said, involves reshaping the banks, planting vegetation to hold it in place and making adjustments in the streambed.

A bid to clean the air with algae

Howard Co. startup is trying to prove that its algae bioreactors are an answer to greenhouse-gas pollution

The 10-foot-tall cylinders glow neon yellow and orange, looking like something out of a futuristic dance club. They're actually an experiment with global implications — an effort to see how well algae can wipe out pollution belched by power plants. The Howard County startup running these bioreactors hasn't hit on an entirely new idea. The U.S. Department of Energy started funding projects related to algae and power plants at least 35 years ago, but the focus largely has been on growing algae for fuel. HY-TEK Bio's aim is emissions reduction, an area getting increasing interest from both companies and countries that see potential in algae. HY-TEK's leaders say algae products — such as biofuel, pharmaceutical ingredients and nutritional supplements — would be secondary, a way to help make the main goal cost-effective. It's an endeavor full of pitfalls. But HY-TEK's motto sums up the potential boon: "Clean energy from fossil fuels." The company is deep into a pilot project at an energy-producing wastewater treatment plant just outside Baltimore, and officials say the results look good. "We're really close to commercialization," said Robert M. Mroz, the four-year-old company's CEO. "By next year, we'll have a revenue stream."

O'Malley outlines possible 2016 bid

Gov. Martin O'Malley told a group of reporters Saturday he was laying the "framework" for his 2016 presidential bid, suggesting the governor has shifted from considering whether he'd like to run to how he would run for the Democratic nomination. While in Milwaukee, Wis. for the National Governors Association, O'Malley told several political journalists over beers at a hotel bar that by this end of this year, he will have mapped out "a body of work that lays the framework of a candidacy for 2016," according to several reports. O'Malley first told The Baltimore Sun in April he would take the next year to consider a campaign for the White House. The governor did not commit to presidential campaign Saturday, but rather said he has been working through a process to do so.

SALISBURY DAILY TIMES

Federal funds will help with Sandy housing rehab

PRINCESS ANNE — Somerset County residents whose properties were damaged by Hurricane Sandy can now begin applying for loans from an \$8.6 million pool of cash awarded to the county last February. Four new county employees who will work with homeowners and administer the federal Community Development Block Grant funds have been on the job since July 8 and underwent training for a few weeks. They began contacting the 30 homeowners who have been on a waiting list last week and are ready to begin taking applications from others. "We're trying to get the word out," said Gary Pusey, the county's planning director. "We're ready to help people." The new hires are housing rehab specialists Brooks Croswell and Annette Cottman and loan program specialists Cathy Landon and Carleen Wells, all of whom live in Somerset County. While many of the applications are likely to come from the Crisfield area, Pusey said property owners in Fairmount and other waterfront communities also suffered damage in the storm. Of the \$8.6 million, \$6 million has been allocated for housing rehabilitation, \$1 million for property buyouts on Smith Island and \$1 million for economic development, which will provide grants and loans to small businesses, as well as grants of up to \$2,500 for watermen with commercial fishing licenses for proven equipment loss.

MARYLAND.NEWSZAP.COM

Chesapeake Bay Trust launches 'Show Us Your Plate' contest

When you're out driving this summer, where do you take your Chesapeake Bay license plate? Is it on long road trips across the country? Or maybe just to Ocean City? The Chesapeake Bay Trust wants to know and is launching a contest to prove it! The Trust, a non-profit grantmaking organization dedicated to restoring the Chesapeake Bay, is looking for Bay plate owners to snap a one-of-a-kind picture of their Treasure the Chesapeake license plate at interesting locations during this summer. Submissions are encouraged to be taken in both interesting places and in creative ways. "The Treasure the Chesapeake license plates are a source of pride for Maryland drivers because they demonstrate the connection we all have to the Bay," said Molly Alton Mullins, director of communications at the Chesapeake Bay Trust. "We thought this contest would be a fun opportunity for people to be creative and get outside this summer, while also showing their support for our beautiful Bay." Photo submissions can be made through the Trust's Bay Plate website through August 30. Three pictures will be selected as the finalists for the contest and the public will get to vote for their favorite from September 3-13. The official winner will be named on Sept. 16 and there are multiple chances to win prizes. There will be two grand prize winners; one for whose picture is chosen as the best

Bay plate photo and the other who will be a randomly selected voter who chose the winning photo. Grand prize winners will receive a \$100 gift card to Amazon.com, tickets to the Trust's 16th Annual Treasure the Chesapeake Celebration gala and other gifts and prizes. The winner will also have their prize-winning photograph featured in the Trust's 2013 Annual Report.

ASSOCIATED PRESS (MD)

Multistate Chesapeake Bay Cleanup Plan Set for October

Several states in the Chesapeake Bay watershed are working toward having a new cleanup agreement ready by October of this year. The Capital reported in July that a new agreement is in the works with clearer goals and greater flexibility and transparency. It would be the fourth Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement in 30 years intended to spur improvements. The last agreement was signed in 2000. The new compact would reflect many of the same broad goals but also some changes. It includes strategies spurred by a 2009 presidential order for a "pollution diet" established by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. The order requires water pollution reductions by 2025. For the first time, the agreement includes the "headwaters" states of New York, Delaware and West Virginia, in addition to Maryland, Virginia, Pennsylvania and the District of Columbia.

VIRGINIA

RICHMOND TIMES-DISPATCH

Building a spawning habitat for sturgeon

Albert Spells started working with Atlantic sturgeon in the James River in 1997, he said, "when the experts were saying that they were functionally extirpated from the Chesapeake Bay." Multiple-year classes were found in the river that year, including some juveniles, 1 to 3 years old. If that was the beginning of the improbable James River sturgeon recovery story, July 26 marked the most recent milestone, one Spells and others hope will help accelerate the resurgence of the ancient species and our understanding of it. Spells is the Virginia fisheries coordinator for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Two Fridays ago, he joined representatives from the James River Association, Luck Stone, and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, as well as members of the media, aboard the JRA's 45-foot pontoon boat. Just downstream from the I-295 bridge, we watched an excavator scoop granite boulders from a gigantic barge and dump them into the river.

NORFOLK VIRGINIAN PILOT

Groups say drilling tool will disturb Va. marine life

While oil rigs drilling off the coast of Virginia are still a question mark in the near future, local environmental groups will be making noise about the possibility today. Beginning at noon, members of Oceana and the Sierra Club will blow horns and clang pots and pans at Waterside Festival Marketplace to symbolize the loud noises made by seismic air guns - devices used to identify oil and gas reserves in the ocean. "The point is to be noisy," said Eileen Levandoski, assistant director of the Virginia Chapter Sierra Club. But it won't be a literal simulation. "We'd be too loud," she said. Surveyors use seismic air guns to send blasts toward the sea floor and measure their echoes to identify drilling prospects. The industry says the method hasn't been shown to hurt marine life and is necessary to open drilling. But environmentalists say it could injure animals and disrupt migration and mating patterns. "The unique part about this technology is that not only is it that first step (toward offshore drilling), but in and of themselves, the air guns are really, really dangerous and destructive," said Caroline Wood, Virginia organizer for Oceana's climate and energy campaign. The U.S. government has estimated that 138,500 whales and dolphins in the Atlantic Ocean will be deafened, injured or killed by the blasts, according to the Virginia Chapter Sierra Club website. The North Atlantic Right Whale - of which only about 500 remain - is among the species at risk. The demonstration, which will be held from noon to 1:30 p.m., is one of many on the East Coast, Wood said, adding that similar demonstrations will take place in Virginia Beach and Alexandria. Debate over offshore drilling, which is years away even under supporters' most optimistic scenarios, is coming to a head this year. The U.S. House in June approved a bill to lift a moratorium on drilling in Virginia waters. The federal government will release a report this fall outlining the environmental impact of East Coast drilling. Offshore drilling has the potential to create 18,000 jobs in Virginia by 2030, according to Nicolette Nye, vice president of communications and external relations of the National Ocean Industries Association. Locally, drilling faces opposition beyond environmentalists: The Navy has opposed it in the offshore areas it uses, and the federal government has been reluctant to share royalties with coastal states, which local legislators say is key to their support. Still, the

environmental groups say they will keep making a clatter. "We just want to make a lot of noise to get people's attention," Wood said.

Virginia Beach sewage treatment plant to shut down

A large, aging sewage treatment plant off Shore Drive on the Chesapeake Bay will be closed and much of it demolished to cut costs and contain future rate increases, the head of the regional sewage authority said this week. The plan to shut down the Chesapeake-Elizabeth plant by 2023 is expected to save between \$200 million and \$300 million over the next 30 years and should not lead to layoffs of the 31 employees, said Ted Henifin, head of the Hampton Roads Sanitation District. It means Hampton Roads would lose one of its five sewage plants that serve more than 1.6 million people - and Henifin hinted more changes and consolidations may be coming in the years ahead. The plan calls for the Chesapeake-Elizabeth site to be converted to a storage area for floodwaters. Tanks would be built, and new pipes and valves would be fitted to accept water during heavy rain before it is slowly released into the bay. The Chesapeake-Elizabeth plant was built in 1965 and is visible from Shore Drive. It discharges sewage treated with chemicals into Little Creek, which then flows into the Chesapeake...In this case, the estimated 18.5 million gallons of raw sewage that arrives each day at the Chesapeake-Elizabeth plant from the western and central parts of Virginia Beach would be rerouted to two neighboring treatment plants - near the Atlantic Ocean in Virginia Beach, and near Norfolk Naval Station, Henifin said.

MISCELLANEOUS

GREENWIRE

Va. regulators deny AEP's plant transfer request

American Electric Power has hit a roadblock after Virginia regulators rejected its plan to shift a power plant between two subsidiaries. The utility wants to shift 50 percent of the coal-fired Mitchell plant, which is located in Moundsville, W.Va., from AEP Ohio to Appalachian Power. The other 50 percent would be transferred to a Kentucky Power subsidiary. AEP made plans for the transfer after Ohio regulators pushed for utilities to compete on the open market. It also proposed transferring its portion of the John E. Amos plant, a move that was approved by Virginia. The Virginia rejection stops AEP's plans because the utility requires approval from federal regulators and utility commissions from the affected states before it can go forward. AEP President and CEO Nick Mitchell called the decision "disappointing."

NEW YORK TIMES

A Republican Case for Climate Action

(Op-Ed 7/1/13) WILLIAM D. RUCKELSHAUS, LEE M. THOMAS, WILLIAM K. REILLY and CHRISTINE TODD WHITMAN - -EACH of us took turns over the past 43 years running the Environmental Protection Agency. We served Republican presidents, but we have a message that transcends political affiliation: the United States must move now on substantive steps to curb climate change, at home and internationally. There is no longer any credible scientific debate about the basic facts: our world continues to warm, with the last decade the hottest in modern records, and the deep ocean warming faster than the earth's atmosphere. Sea level is rising. Arctic Sea ice is melting years faster than projected. The costs of inaction are undeniable. The lines of scientific evidence grow only stronger and more numerous. And the window of time remaining to act is growing smaller: delay could mean that warming becomes "locked in." A market-based approach, like a carbon tax, would be the best path to reducing greenhouse-gas emissions, but that is unachievable in the current political gridlock in Washington. Dealing with this political reality, President Obama's June climate action plan lays out achievable actions that would deliver real progress. He will use his executive powers to require reductions in the amount of carbon dioxide emitted by the nation's power plants and spur increased investment in clean energy technology, which is inarguably the path we must follow to ensure a strong economy along with a livable climate. The president also plans to use his regulatory power to limit the powerful warming chemicals known as hydrofluorocarbons and encourage the United States to join with other nations to amend the Montreal Protocol to phase out these chemicals. The landmark international treaty, which took effect in 1989, already has been hugely successful in solving the ozone problem. Rather than argue against his proposals, our leaders in Congress should endorse them and start the overdue debate about what bigger steps are needed and how to achieve them — domestically and internationally.

LA TIMES

Official calls for federal review of San Pedro gas storage site

A congressman is urging federal officials to more thoroughly investigate the safety of a San Pedro butane storage facility situated near homes, schools and shopping areas in San Pedro. Rep. Henry A. Waxman (D-Los Angeles) sent a letter to the Department of Homeland Security demanding that the agency take additional steps to protect the public from the risk of explosion at the Rancho LPG Holdings site on North Gaffey Street. Waxman said he was concerned that an earlier Homeland Security inspection of the facility was cursory, did little to verify the company's safety information and conflicted with recent findings by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. The 20-acre facility includes two 80-foot-high storage tanks capable of holding up to 25 million gallons of liquefied petroleum gas, such as highly flammable butane and propane. Built more than 40 years ago under an industrial zoning from World War II, the site is about 1,000 feet from homes that existed before construction of the tanks. Residents, local activists and elected officials contend the facility is unsafe and fear a major explosion would destroy the nearby community.

USA TODAY

Train derails in La., about 100 homes evacuated

LAWTELL, La. (AP) — A train carrying hazardous materials derailed in Louisiana and two railcars were leaking chemicals, forcing the evacuation of about 100 homes, officials said. One man went to the hospital complaining of eye irritation. More than 20 cars of the Union Pacific train went off the tracks about 3:30 p.m. Sunday near Lawtell, which is about 60 miles west of Baton Rouge. Company spokeswoman Raquel Espinoza said one of the railcars was leaking sodium hydroxide, which can cause injuries or even death if it is inhaled or touches the skin. The other was leaking lube oil. Master Trooper Daniel "Scott" Moreau said the leaks were contained and the amounts were so small air pollution detectors have not picked up anything, but homes within about one mile of the derailment were evacuated as a precaution. "We have the hazmat team from Union Pacific, and state police hazmat are on location right now, assessing the damage," he said. Gov. Bobby Jindal flew into St. Landry Parish on Sunday night, KATC-TV reported. "Anytime you have chemicals leaking into the environment, that's a serious issue," Jindal said. "Nobody knows the extent of the damage. We'll get that in the next 24 hours."

GRIST MAGAZINE

Former Republican EPA chiefs back Obama on climate change (blog 7/2/13) What do Richard Nixon, Ronald Reagan, George Bush, and George W. Bush have in common? Yes, OK, obviously they were all Republican presidents. But now there's something else that ties them all together. EPA administrators who worked for all of those presidents have come out in support of stronger actions on climate change, co-signing a powerful op-ed in *The New York Times* supporting Barack Obama's climate plan and arguing that "the United States must move now on substantive steps to curb climate change." Here are some highlights from the op-ed, which was written by William D. Ruckelshaus, Lee M. Thomas, William K. Reilly, and Christine Todd Whitman: The costs of inaction are undeniable. The lines of scientific evidence grow only stronger and more numerous. And the window of time remaining to act is growing smaller: delay could mean that warming becomes "locked in." A market-based approach, like a carbon tax, would be the best path to reducing greenhouse-gas emissions, but that is unachievable in the current political gridlock in Washington. Dealing with this political reality, President Obama's June climate action plan lays out achievable actions that would deliver real progress. He will use his executive powers to require reductions in the amount of carbon dioxide emitted by the nation's power plants and spur increased investment in clean energy technology, which is inarguably the path we must follow to ensure a strong economy along with a livable climate. ... Rather than argue against his proposals, our leaders in Congress should endorse them and start the overdue debate about what bigger steps are needed and how to achieve them — domestically and internationally. ... We can have both a strong economy and a livable climate. All parties know that we need both. The rest of the discussion is either detail, which we can resolve, or purposeful delay, which we should not tolerate. Mr. Obama's plan is just a start. More will be required. But we must continue efforts to reduce the climate-altering pollutants that threaten our planet. The only uncertainty about our warming world is how bad the changes will get, and how soon. What is most clear is that there is no time to waste

NEWJERSEY.COM

Mold can be frightening but curable with right help

It is one of the worse fears a homeowner can sniff out when they walk down to their basement — water, moisture, and

dampness! This home showed signs of three potential drawbacks – water, moisture, and mold damage. "When selling or purchasing a home today mold and water and moisture issues can be a big deal breaker. They don't have to be in most cases, explained Robert Walker, owner of Advanced Basements Solutions, located in Pompton Lakes. "For potential buyers, you want to do your due diligence in any area. Talk to potential neighbors and ask them if they get water or does the neighborhood (get water). Most people will tell you (the truth) as long as they are not selling their house." According to Walker, there is mold everywhere. "First off, every home or office or building has mold! It's how much and sometimes what type, that matters. Black mold isn't necessarily the end all. Unfortunately, mold has become the new radon of the 2000s and lead will be next. If you are allergic to mold or immune compromised it can be a serious health issue for you. But for others, it is an issue that needs to be addressed, but not necessarily feared," said Walker. "Mold comes in as allergens, pathogens, and toxigens. Don't necessarily be afraid of black mold. There are less than 30 molds currently of concern on a mold report, but more that 1,000 known black molds. Just because it's black doesn't mean it's a toxigenic mold. However, mold can be a good an indicator that something else is going on in the home or structure or has in the past. The CDC and the EPA say if you have mold remove it. However, you must find and eliminate the cause as well," he continued.

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